

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MAYOR'S HEARING

FISCAL YEAR 2010 BUDGET

Tuesday, March 3, 2009

Washington, D.C.

1 PARTICIPANTS:

2 ADRIAN M. FENTY
Mayor of the District of Columbia

3 VICTOR REINOSO
4 Deputy Mayor for Education of the District of
Columbia

5 MATT FRUMIN
6 Wilson Management Corporation

7 TOM ISRAEL
Deal Middle School

8 IRIS TOYER
9 MARGOT BERKEY
Parents United

10 MARY LEVY
11 Public Education Reform Project

12 ERIKA LANDBERG
JEFF SMITH
13 D.C. Voice

14 ILANA LIPSETT
SIEU Local 32BJ

15 CHAD WOMACK
16 Emerging Technology Consortium

17 JAMES PITMAN
CARRIE L. THORNHILL
18 Dunbar Alumni Federation

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 (9:40 a.m.)

3 MAYOR FENTY: Good morning. We are
4 here at H.D. Woodson High School at Fletcher
5 Johnson on Benning Road. And we call to order
6 the Mayor's Fiscal Year 2010 DCPS Budget
7 Hearing. I want to welcome everybody. I'm
8 joined by the Deputy Mayor for Education, Victor
9 Reinoso. It is approximately 9:42 a.m. on
10 March 3, 2009.

11 We will call the first four
12 witnesses. Instead of Jack Koezela from the
13 Wilson Management Corporation, we have Matt
14 Frumin.

15 Please, if you're here, come to the
16 witness stand when your name is called.

17 The second witness is Tom Israel,
18 who is with the Deal Middle School LSRT. The
19 third person on the witness list is Iris
20 Toyer, who is from Parents United. And then
21 Margot Berkey from Parents United.

22 And it says here in parentheses

1 that you're here on behalf of Cathy Reilly as
2 well -- okay, excellent. Please tell her
3 hello.

4 We will begin with the Wilson
5 Management Corporation.

6 Mr. Frumin, you can provide your
7 testimony.

8 MR. FRUMIN: Good morning,
9 Mr. Mayor --

10 MAYOR FENTY: Good morning.

11 MR. FRUMIN: And Deputy Mayor. My
12 name is Matthew Frumin. I'm a parent of a
13 graduate of Woodrow Wilson High School, a
14 current Wilson student, and a child who will be
15 attending Wilson in two years.

16 I'm also the Treasurer of the
17 Woodrow Wilson Management Corporation, the
18 non-profit company whose board is made up of
19 administrators, teachers, staff, parents, and
20 Wilson community members. It is the mission
21 of the WMC to promote the success of every
22 student at Wilson through effective

1 facilities and services.

2 Thank you for the opportunity to
3 testify at this morning's hearing. We
4 understand that the purpose of this hearing
5 is primarily to solicit views on the levels
6 of public funding sought in the FY 2010
7 operating budget for public schools.

8 Although we have a comment or two
9 with respect to operating budget, we believe
10 that today's hearing also provides a needed
11 forum for us to comment on the capital budget
12 for the schools to come through the Office of
13 Public Education Facilities Management as
14 another government agency that supports
15 youth.

16 Over the long term, proper capital
17 investment may be the best way to reduce or
18 control operating expenses.

19 First, it is important to note that
20 an enormous amount of positive things are
21 happening at Wilson High. The school is
22 being turned around and improved every day,

1 thanks to the leadership of Principal Cahall,
2 Chancellor Rhee, the Mayor, and the
3 Deputy Mayor, and the team for education in
4 the District.

5 Wilson is already a nationally
6 recognized school, but we look forward to
7 this year's progress being locked in and
8 built upon in the coming years. Our hope is
9 that Principal Cahall's ambition that Wilson
10 become the model urban high school in the
11 United States will be fulfilled, and in the
12 process, it will become a symbol of what DCPS
13 and your leadership can achieve.

14 Under the FY 2000 MFP and CIP,
15 Wilson High School was to have commenced
16 construction on its modernization efforts in
17 FY 2004. In the 2007 CIP, Wilson was listed
18 as starting a \$102 million modernization in
19 FY 2009. In the most recent documents
20 available to us, Wilson is again listed to
21 begin modernization in FY 2010, a short seven
22 months from now.

1 Presently, OPEFM is in the middle
2 of a procurement process for A&E team to
3 finish off a concept plan and then commence
4 with design, development, and construction
5 drawings. Finally, after six long years, or
6 ten, if you go back to the original MFP,
7 Wilson is poised to begin the modernization
8 of its 75-year-old campus.

9 However, we are here before you
10 today to ensure that the City fully funds
11 whatever is required to bring Wilson into the
12 21st Century, and ensure what gets renovated
13 or built anew becomes a physical structure
14 that can last for another 75 years, and a
15 testament to the accomplishment of this
16 period of school modernization and
17 improvement, while becoming a true community
18 asset consistent with the goals of your MFP
19 for high schools.

20 Excuse me.

21 I thought I was to get five
22 minutes.

1 MAYOR FENTY: Could you just begin to
2 summarize, please?

3 MR. FRUMIN: All right. There's two
4 paragraphs at the end that are key.

5 MAYOR FENTY: Okay.

6 MR. FRUMIN: When Wilson was built in
7 the 1930s, cost-cutting measures at the time
8 resulted in a school constructed on the contours
9 of the land rather than on a base plinth,
10 resulting in 11 different levels. Wilson has
11 both students and faculty who utilize
12 wheelchairs for mobility, and Wilson is also
13 designated a DCPS High School for Blind
14 Students.

15 Persons in wheelchairs can't access
16 spaces in the school other than in the main
17 building.

18 We have one operable elevator.
19 Lifts are inoperable at every staircase. And
20 even if they were operable, lifts are not
21 present at five of the eleven levels.

22 The budget for long-term operating

1 costs for 11 elevators or lifts in an LEED
2 building, energy-efficient, is simply not
3 going to be available; nor does it make sense
4 to design a modern facility in that fashion.
5 We encourage adequate capital funding to
6 limit operating budget needs and to keep our
7 schools green.

8 We are before you here today
9 because there are rumors that the City is
10 planning on scaling down the modernization
11 program at each school so that funds can be
12 spread across more projects. We take
13 exception to such an effort, and believe that
14 most of your constituents would find that
15 such a plan to be heading in exactly the
16 wrong direction.

17 The City's largest school, DCPS's
18 flagship comprehensive high school, with 1500
19 students from all 22 ZIP codes and all eight
20 wards, needs a first-class renovation. That
21 cannot be done for \$30 million. It cannot be
22 done for \$60 million. We have completed

1 professional cost estimates of viable,
2 adaptive, reused programs for Wilson and know
3 it will cost more than that.

4 We have faith that OPEFM will
5 verify our estimates in the very near future.
6 We at Wilson would rather wait another year
7 if it meant our modernization could be funded
8 properly.

9 In addition, we believe we have
10 developed a phasing plan if swing space at
11 UDC can be utilized that allows for our
12 project to be completed in two years rather
13 than three-and-a-half or four, and can save
14 between \$10 and \$15 million. Those savings
15 would go a long way towards properly funding
16 other projects.

17 Thank you again for your time and
18 attention.

19 MAYOR FENTY: Thank you very much,
20 Mr. Frumin.

21 Next on our witness list is Tom
22 Israel from Deal Middle School, and a member

1 of the LSRT.

2 MS. ISRAEMS. LEVY: Good morning,
3 Mr. Mayor, Mr. Deputy Mayor, and thank you for
4 this opportunity to comment on the proposed
5 FY 10 operating budget.

6 As you both know, Deal Middle
7 School is one of the highest performing and
8 most diverse middle-grade schools in DCPS.
9 Our students come from all eight wards across
10 the District, and close to 50 percent of our
11 students come from outer boundary
12 neighborhoods.

13 We are proud of the hard work and
14 skill of our teachers and staff, as well as
15 the increasing success of so many of our
16 students. And we are grateful for the
17 investment in our school that, by the start
18 of next year, will provide our students with
19 a first-class learning environment.

20 We want to thank everyone within
21 the District, the City, and the community who
22 have worked so hard over these many years to

1 bring that modernization project to reality.

2 Unfortunately, that investment will
3 go to waste if we do not preserve the
4 high-quality instructional program under
5 development at Deal. The proposed DCPS
6 budget for Deal for next year is not just
7 inadequate; it threatens to devastate the
8 instructional program at our school.

9 Simply put, the next DCPS staffing
10 formula only allows for Deal to have 58
11 classroom teacher positions. Our local
12 school plan requires 65 classroom teacher
13 positions. Without adequate staffing, we
14 have only two choices:

15 One, we could eliminate all
16 world-language instruction. Currently, we
17 are quite proud of the fact that 79 percent
18 of our students are learning a second
19 language. That would not be possible without
20 adequate staffing, nor would we be able to
21 continue on our path to become the only
22 middle years international baccalaureate

1 program in DCPS.

2 Alternatively, we would be faced
3 with the unpalatable option of increasing
4 average class sizes to more than 32.

5 In crafting a budget that will
6 adequately support Deal's instructional
7 program, we believe there are four
8 fundamental building blocks. First is
9 enrollment. Deal projects its enrollment at
10 870, while the central offices projected our
11 enrollment at just 844. We believe this is
12 unrealistically low, given both the size of
13 our returning eighth-grade class and the
14 predictable draw that our completed
15 renovation will have for incoming families.

16 Second, our instructional program
17 is intentionally structured on a middle
18 school teaming model. Three full teams at
19 each grade level necessitates a higher
20 staffing level than evidenced in the initial
21 budget. The alternative is to create teams
22 that are combinations between six and seven

1 and seven and eight, which are nowhere near
2 as productive for our students.

3 Thirdly, I've mentioned our
4 emphasis on foreign language instruction. We
5 offer Spanish, French, and Chinese. This
6 focus on world languages is a core element of
7 our vision and program, and without adequate
8 staffing, we would not only have to eliminate
9 foreign language instruction, but would be
10 unable to meet the requirements that 100
11 students take the world language that are
12 part of the middle years IB program.

13 Finally, for several years now,
14 DCPS has supported Deal's development as the
15 only DCPS middle year IB program. Our IB
16 program should be recognized as a special
17 program by DCPS so that necessary funding for
18 our IB coordinator and the required annual
19 professional development is supported
20 financially by the District.

21 We understand the complexity of the
22 budget process, and we know that both DCPS

1 and the District Government want to support
2 our schools. We look forward to working with
3 the DCPS staff to ensure that the success at
4 Deal Middle School can continue, and we
5 appreciate the assistance of the Mayor and
6 your staff in ensuring that the right thing
7 is done for our students and their future.
8 Thank you.

9 MAYOR FENTY: Thank you very much,
10 Mr. Israel. Like Mr. Frumin before you, thank
11 you for being here on behalf of the young people
12 at Deal and young people at Wilson.

13 Next on the witness list is Iris
14 Toyer, from Parents United.

15 MS. TOYER: Good morning, Mayor Fenty.

16 MAYOR FENTY: Good morning.

17 MS. TOYER: I am Iris Toyer,
18 Chairperson for Parents United for the D.C.
19 Public Schools. I'm the mother of an 11th-grade
20 DCPS student, and the grandmother of two very
21 young DCPS students. I have a vested interest
22 in ensuring that this school system provides our

1 City's children a high-quality education. My
2 husband and I are both DCPS graduates, as well
3 as our three adult children. The system, for
4 all of its shortcomings, has served my family
5 well.

6 For years, this hearing has been
7 used as an opportunity for parents, school
8 advocates, and the interested community
9 members to speak to the Mayor regarding the
10 academic and programmatic needs of our
11 children, and also to inform the wider
12 community. We have used it to be both a
13 critic and supporter of the direction of D.C.
14 Public Schools.

15 For those of us who have been
16 deeply engaged in this process, we are
17 profoundly disturbed by the inferior quality
18 of the budget information released by this
19 Administration for public consumption.

20 For example, we have no idea how
21 many students the system is preparing for.
22 The October 5th, 2008 enrollment audit has

1 not been released. So it is unclear what
2 enrollment number the 2010 budget is based
3 on. In October, DCPS reported 46,206
4 students, 1538 shy of last year's projection.
5 This year, the 2010 projection is for 47,267,
6 indicating growth.

7 We would like to think the DCPS
8 student population is going to increase. But
9 as you are aware, the history of DCPS clearly
10 shows a downward trend. Perhaps the
11 Administration can demonstrate where, how,
12 and why this growth will occur for the coming
13 school year. Otherwise, the projected
14 enrollment number upon which this budget is
15 based is a joke.

16 My colleague, Mary Levy, has done
17 some analysis in the limited time available
18 since the budget was posted late last Friday.
19 Her review revealed that, while DCPS's bottom
20 line matches that of the chief financial
21 officer's calculated baseline budget for
22 DCPS, little else does. There is no funding

1 for communications or procurement, and there
2 are multiple entries for one program number.

3 What conclusions are we to draw
4 from these inconsistencies? According to the
5 budget developed timeline posted on DCPS's
6 Web site, the public was to expect that local
7 school budgets were to be loaded into the
8 City's 2010 budget by February 26th. If that
9 is so, why would the Administration release
10 the pre-roundtable budgets for comment?

11 We are led to ask if this hearing
12 is being held solely for the purpose of
13 complying with the legal requirement to hold
14 the hearing, and just barely doing so. As a
15 community, we place a high value on providing
16 substantive input during the DCPS budget
17 process. It is our hope that you and the
18 members of your Administration will also come
19 to value and respect parent and community
20 input in this important process.

21 MAYOR FENTY: Thank you very much,
22 Ms. Toyer.

1 We'll next hear from Margot Berkey
2 who, in addition to being with Parents
3 United, it says here also a parent of a
4 Wilson High School student. There are two
5 Wilson High School parents on the first
6 panel.

7 Please begin.

8 MS. BERKEY: That's right. We are a
9 member.

10 Good morning, Mayor Fenty,
11 Mr. Reinoso. My name is Margot Berkey. I'm
12 the parent of a 10th-grade student at Wilson.
13 As you know, I've been active in city
14 education issues for the past decade. I
15 serve on two LSRT's. I've been co-president
16 of a school's parent organization. I
17 volunteer for Parents United. And I even
18 served on your own educational advisory team
19 during your mayoral transition.

20 I'm here today because I have
21 always believed that the budget for our
22 schools is a crucial area of concern, because

1 it relates directly to how our children are
2 served and supported in their education. The
3 budget ought to be a direct reflection of the
4 priorities, needs, and plans for improvement
5 of DCPS.

6 The purpose of this hearing is for
7 us to provide informed testimony to you on
8 the proposed budget, such that you can
9 incorporate our needs and desires into the
10 final changes to the budget. But today, I
11 come here feeling tremendous frustration with
12 the lack of information that you, the
13 Chancellor, and the D.C. Chief Financial
14 Officer have chosen to provide.

15 The budget information made
16 available on Friday, February 27th is
17 inaccurate, and does not reflect genuine
18 proposals for local school funds, as is
19 evident from the many errors on the sheets.
20 This inaccurate information was available to
21 the public less than four days in advance of
22 this hearing, such that one might think that

1 there was a desire for the information to be
2 up-to-the-minute; yet, the opposite is true.

3 The information we've been given is
4 deliberately misleading. Whereas many
5 parents and District residents would like to
6 trust DCPS to allocate funds equitably and
7 fairly to meet local school needs and to
8 improve the school system, the action of
9 providing false information completely breaks
10 our trust and undermines the purpose of this
11 hearing.

12 We're also frustrated that we have
13 had no reports on DCPS spending since the
14 mayoral takeover of the schools. There
15 appears to be collusion between the executive
16 branch and the office of the independent CFO
17 in this regard.

18 In recent years, until the mayoral
19 takeover of our schools, we were able to view
20 online spending reports that increased the
21 accountability of DCPS to the public it
22 serves. Now we don't even know whether the

1 last fiscal year closed with a balanced
2 budget, a surplus, or cost overruns.

3 We know that millions of dollars
4 are being spent on contracts, but we have no
5 idea whether any of those contracts are
6 actually helping to build and strengthen the
7 infrastructure of the school system.

8 It's difficult for us to accept the
9 premise that mayoral takeover was going to
10 increase efficiency, identify wasteful
11 spending, and be more accountable, when even
12 basic financial reports are kept from the
13 public.

14 This is not about micro-managing.
15 It's about being clear and accountable for
16 the decisions and choices that are being made
17 and have been made.

18 Because on the front line, in the
19 schools, there's still a long way to go
20 before we feel that our children are not
21 being deprived of the necessary resources for
22 a quality education.

1 It doesn't take much to remedy this
2 course of action. But the will has to be
3 there to make education reform the community
4 concern it needs to be. Many of us believe
5 that you cannot do it without genuine public
6 engagement. Pushing us away and persistently
7 providing no information, limited
8 information, or in this case false
9 information, will not succeed.

10 And I'm also here to speak on
11 behalf of Cathy Reilly, the Director of the
12 Senior High Alliance of Parents, Principals,
13 and Educators, also known as SHAPE.

14 MAYOR FENTY: Can you just submit her
15 testimony for the record?

16 MS. BERKEY: With who? Cathy?

17 MAYOR FENTY: Cathy's, yes. We have
18 it.

19 MS. BERKEY: I have submitted her
20 testimony.

21 MAYOR FENTY: Excellent. Thank you
22 very much.

1 And I want to thank all four of you
2 as a panel. Going back to my City Council
3 days and even Committee on Education days, I
4 know not only the organizations that you're
5 with, but actually was a student at both Deal
6 for three years and Wilson one.

7 So the representations that you
8 made will be passed along to our entire
9 education team, most notably the Chancellor.
10 And as is the case, as many of your good
11 ideas, as is the case with all of the
12 residents who bring good ideas to the
13 Administration, will be incorporated into the
14 budget that will be released later this
15 month.

16 Thank you all very much. The next
17 four panelists are Mary Levy from The Public
18 Education Reform Project, also the Washington
19 Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights. You can
20 please come forward.

21 Following her and also on this
22 witness stand, Erika Landberg from D.C.

1 Voice. I have Erika Landberg and Jeff Smith.

2 Are you both testifying or just one of you
3 testifying?

4 MS. LANDBERG: Both.

5 MAYOR FENTY: Both are. Okay. You
6 both can come forward. And then the fourth
7 person would be Ilana Lipsett, who is with SIEU
8 Local 32BJ.

9 So, Ms. Levy, whenever you are
10 ready, you can begin your testimony.

11 MS. LEVY: Good morning. I'm Mary
12 Levy. I am the mother of two graduates of the
13 D.C. Public Schools, one of whom taught here for
14 two years. And I've been studying the budget
15 and the policies of D.C. Public Schools for 30
16 years now.

17 I've put together a table. This is
18 mostly just an informational piece. We don't
19 really have enough information on which to
20 advocate anything one way or another. But I
21 thought that people would be interested to
22 know that the budget for DCPS on a per-pupil

1 basis, if you stick to this year's mark, will
2 have risen 20 percent, which is about the
3 rate of inflation, maybe a little more.

4 There was a big bulge last year.
5 That's because of an appropriation that was
6 not part of the uniform per-student funding
7 formula. As Ms. Toyer pointed out, the CFO,
8 for reasons that rather mystify me, is
9 predicting an increase in enrollment next
10 year. And that's over -- it's 2 percent over
11 this year's unaudited enrollment.

12 I've listed something I call
13 Questions and Uncertainties, because I think
14 there's a lot to learn about the budget: The
15 assumptions about pay increases, what will be
16 done with the federal economic stimulus
17 money, whether the Title I and idea money is
18 to be used to supplant or to supplement local
19 funding, because we know there's a problem
20 with the revenue shortfall.

21 We really don't know from this
22 budget where the money is planned to go

1 inside the D.C. Public School system. So I
2 can't comment on that. And the last thing I
3 would say is that, despite all the noise
4 about transparency, I've never seen less
5 transparency.

6 We used to get this information in
7 November, and there was a lot more of it.
8 This was, of course, in the days before
9 computers. I don't understand why, with all
10 the technology we have, we can get to March
11 without having an audit of our enrollment or
12 budget information that tells us where the
13 money is going.

14 Thank you.

15 MAYOR FENTY: Thank you very much,
16 Ms. Levy.

17 Next on the witness list is Erika
18 Landberg of D.C. Voice.

19 MS. LANDBERG: Good morning. Good
20 morning, Mr. Mayor and Mr. Reinoso. I thank you
21 for this opportunity to testify.

22 We've structured our testimony on a

1 series of questions. We have nine questions,
2 so it's really nine for '09, Teaching and
3 Learning Questions from us.

4 And they're based on two areas.
5 One is our own Ready Schools project findings
6 this year. We've gone to all schools the
7 last two years. And we thank you, Mr. Mayor,
8 for your support for that project.

9 MAYOR FENTY: You're welcome.

10 MS. LANDBERG: And second, what we're
11 going to ask about is based on the town hall
12 discussion and analysis meetings where the
13 community really looks at the data and comes
14 forth with recommendations.

15 We hope these questions can be
16 answered by you or your staff before their
17 submission to the City Council in March.

18 The first is on staffing. Question
19 number one: What will you do to ensure that
20 school closures, school administration
21 changes and restructuring actions, and
22 budgetary decisions are accomplished early

1 enough to facilitate completed hiring for the
2 opening of school?

3 Our data showed that the numbers
4 really plummeted this year, and that's really
5 important to work on early.

6 The second two questions come from
7 professional development. We all know that
8 training is really important for all of our
9 employees, plus support for new teachers. So
10 question number two is, will you include
11 sufficient funding in the budget to implement
12 the comprehensive professional development
13 plan that our teachers particularly need to
14 do quality teaching?

15 Question three: Will there be
16 funding targeted to new teacher support so
17 that they have what they need as new
18 teachers?

19 Questions four and five are on
20 learning conditions. We would say that the
21 budget supports for computers and internet
22 access did go up, and we hope they continue.

1 And our question number five is, will the
2 budget focus on building repairs and
3 maintenance continue at the present high
4 levels and go beyond?

5 MR. SMITH: Thank you. I'll pick up
6 where Erika left off with the remaining
7 questions.

8 Good morning, Mayor Fenty and
9 Deputy Mayor Reinoso.

10 MAYOR FENTY: Good morning.

11 MR. SMITH: I remember, Mayor Fenty,
12 when we met at a coffee shop on Pennsylvania
13 Avenue back in 2004. And we met to talk about
14 public schooling here in the District of
15 Columbia. And one of the things you left that
16 conversation we remember most was your interest
17 in really getting parental involvement in public
18 education here in this City.

19 MAYOR FENTY: Yes. Thank you.

20 MR. SMITH: So I'll pick up where our
21 data found some information about parental
22 involvement and some questions we have about how

1 the City might address that.

2 As you know, high parental
3 involvement is directly related to high
4 student achievement. The Ready Schools
5 project data showed pretty low levels of
6 system support in place to improve parental
7 and community engagement.

8 So our question is, what
9 specifically will be included in the school
10 year 2010 budget to help local schools, their
11 administrators, and teachers effectively
12 reach out to their parents and community
13 members?

14 I've also submitted two pages of
15 small graphs with our testimony. The one
16 I've circled there, on page one, the fourth
17 graph shows results from just a 100-person
18 survey that we did, just of TANF recipients
19 here in the District of Columbia, around the
20 City Council bill for parental support that
21 was poorly authored and thought out, and
22 which you vetoed. But we did that survey in

1 response to that legislation.

2 And one of the questions, after
3 finding out that 97 percent of the
4 interviewees had kids in the school system,
5 60 percent said they attend schools and have
6 PTA, PTO, or parent organizations.

7 Over 70 percent said they didn't
8 know who was in charge of their PTA, PTO, or
9 parent support organization.

10 So our question, again, is what
11 will this year's budget do to address that
12 and other parental support figures?

13 In school climate, we found that
14 relatively little attention was being applied
15 or awareness was had by principals about
16 school climate and how they could improve it.

17 So our question number seven is, what will
18 the fiscal year 2010 budget do to address
19 this important aspect of local schools?

20 Under school/community
21 partnerships, any time I go to another city
22 to talk about public education, people from

1 across the nation say, "man, it must be great
2 to be in the Nation's Capital, where there
3 are so many resources for public education."
4 And they're right. Universities, businesses,
5 non-profits like ours, I think, are
6 constantly clamoring for points of access to
7 public schools and to local schools in their
8 community.

9 But without any shown supports in
10 the budget, I think, for how we can support
11 principals in managing those partnerships and
12 deploying them efficiently, that will fail as
13 the Ready Schools project data shows, to
14 really impact student achievement and to be
15 deployed intelligently.

16 And the last question is around
17 wraparound services. We know your
18 administration put a great emphasis on this
19 by creating ICSIC through the Department of
20 Education and the Deputy Mayor. The research
21 we did this year showed that only 20 percent
22 of principals knew what ICSIC was. But we

1 understand that that may be the result of it
2 being a pilot that's just applied to our
3 certain schools.

4 If that is the case, our question
5 is, will the fiscal year 2010 budget take
6 into consideration the results, the early
7 results of this pilot? And will that pilot
8 be made available to the public and other
9 policy makers so that we know what the cause
10 is for growth or expansion of that program?

11 And then lastly, since I have 15
12 seconds left, the question which was raised
13 by an earlier person -- oh, that's actually
14 seconds over my testimony.

15 My last thing I would leave is, if
16 we're going to project for growth -- and I
17 agree that certainly, we should, within
18 DCPS -- we should be hoping that more parents
19 are going to choose us as their first choice
20 for educating their children. That we should
21 be able to see that in the budget as well.

22 And so in a budget that doesn't

1 show communications or parental involvement
2 or what the City is doing to reach parents of
3 three-year-olds like myself, to say, This is
4 where you should come, this is how you should
5 access D.C. Public Schools -- then we should
6 probably count on not seeing that growth,
7 unless we can see it in our budget.

8 Thank you.

9 MAYOR FENTY: Thank you very much.
10 And last on this panel is Ilana Lipsett from
11 SIEU.

12 MS. LIPSETT: Thank you. Good
13 morning, Mr. Mayor, Mr. Deputy Mayor. And thank
14 you for the opportunity to offer our views on
15 the proposed budget for funding for DCPS fiscal
16 year 2010. Again, my name is Ilana Lipsett.
17 I'm the Political Director for the Capital Area
18 District at Local 32BJ of SIEU.

19 We have over 110,000 members in
20 nine states, including the District. We're
21 the largest property service workers union in
22 the country, and we represent over 13,000

1 workers in D.C., the D.C. metro area,
2 including 1300 security officers in D.C.
3 Commercial office buildings.

4 We know how hard these officers
5 work as frontline workers guarding some of
6 the most sensitive buildings in the City.
7 And I'm here today to talk also about the
8 importance of funding for security at the
9 schools, which are also extremely important
10 buildings.

11 Working with the District, and with
12 your help, the union has been able to
13 increase wages and contracting standards for
14 the private security industry, resulting in
15 higher standards for officers and
16 better-quality services for the City and its
17 citizens.

18 And since the passage of the
19 Enhanced Professional Security Amendment Act,
20 with your support, which we appreciate,
21 service and morale among security guards in
22 the commercial sector has improved and

1 officer turnover has declined, creating a
2 more stable work environment.

3 There is nothing more important
4 than the safety and security of our citizens
5 and children. And we believe that we must
6 expand upon the successes we've had in the
7 private security industry to better protect
8 our children. In particular, the proper
9 training of security officers at the schools
10 is key to ensuring the safety of our
11 students.

12 And the District also has the
13 responsibility to award the school security
14 contracts to responsible contractors. While
15 we're keenly aware of the budget crisis in
16 the District and the need for fiscal
17 responsibility, we believe it's not in the
18 best interests of the District taxpayers or
19 its children to award these important,
20 publicly funded contracts based on low-bid
21 preferences to irresponsible companies who
22 can't properly support, train, or pay their

1 employees.

2 The success of the Enhanced
3 Professional Security Amendment Act is just
4 one example of the effect that increased
5 training and standards can have on a private
6 security work force.

7 Another is the New York Safe and
8 Secure. It's a program that we have in New
9 York. It's a partnership between our union,
10 the New York police department, fire
11 department, and real estate industry to
12 provide training programs for security guards
13 and frontline building service workers.

14 We believe that those at the
15 District's public schools, both teachers and
16 students, would benefit from the officers
17 protecting these buildings having the same
18 level of training that the officers in New
19 York receive. I've given an outline of the
20 training program to share with you, and we're
21 more than happy to discuss how this program
22 can be duplicated in D.C. and in the school

1 system.

2 So thanks again for the opportunity
3 to testify on the budget. Again, we believe
4 that all public dollars must be tied to high
5 standards for workers and must support
6 responsible contractors. Good jobs promote
7 better security and are good for D.C. And we
8 all know how important security is at our
9 schools. So I urge you to keep these
10 comments in mind when finalizing the budget.

11 And I'm happy to answer any
12 questions that you have. Thanks.

13 MAYOR FENTY: Thank you very much.
14 Thank all four of you. As I told the last
15 panel, we will add your testimony to all of the
16 great recommendations that we get from so many
17 residents over the course of the year, not just
18 with this particular agency, but with all of the
19 ones under the purview of the executive branch.

20 And as we prepare for the fiscal
21 year 2010 budget, we will, within the
22 constraints of the taxpayer dollars allowed

1 for us to manage the government, we will get
2 as much accomplished as humanly possible.

3 So thank you all very much. We
4 have one more panel.

5 That is Chad Womack from Emerging
6 Technology Consortium, followed by James
7 Pitman from the Dunbar Alumni Federation and
8 as well as Carrie L. Thornhill from the
9 Dunbar Alumni Federation. And that will
10 complete the testimony for this hearing.

11 Mr. Pitman, we will begin with you
12 whenever you're ready.

13 MR. PITMAN: Good morning.

14 MAYOR FENTY: Good morning.

15 MR. PITMAN: Mr. Mayor,
16 Mr. Deputy Mayor, my name is James Pitman,
17 member of the Dunbar Senior High School Class of
18 1951. Accompanying me is Carrie Thornhill,
19 Alumnus of Dunbar class of 1961.

20 Dunbar Senior High School has a
21 unique heritage: The first African-American
22 public high school in the country, with

1 thousands of proud and highly successful
2 alumni in D.C., throughout the nation, and
3 the world.

4 We speak today on behalf of the
5 Board of Directors of the Dunbar Alumni
6 Federation in support of the fiscal year 2010
7 budget request of Dunbar Senior High School.
8 The Dunbar Alumni Federation was organized in
9 2002. DAF is an umbrella organization of all
10 the Dunbar alumni classes, and presently an
11 alliance of over 1200 Dunbar Senior High
12 School alumni and friends who work together
13 to create better futures of current Dunbar
14 students and its recent graduates.

15 Specifically, we provide
16 scholarship and other financial support to
17 students and graduates. We promote and
18 support over 32 individual Dunbar High School
19 alumni classes in their respective
20 scholarship efforts, community activities,
21 and other endeavors.

22 We promote acquisition of life

1 skills and cultural values that will assist
2 students in their academic and career
3 pursuits. We solicit funds from individuals,
4 corporations, and other non-profit
5 organizations to specific projects or meet
6 general needs and/or establish an endowment.

7 We identify innovative educational
8 programs and concepts for implementation of
9 Dunbar High School consistent with curriculum
10 policies of the D.C. Public Schools.

11 We identify and acquire equipment,
12 facilities, or programs where special
13 attention is desired. We support
14 professional development and training for
15 staff and parents to promote educational
16 objectives of D.C. Public Schools.

17 And we chronicle the richness of
18 Dunbar by updating the Dunbar history to
19 document the stunning, powerful, and
20 compelling place that was Dunbar in order to
21 inspire and teach for elements made Dunbar
22 the standard for academic excellence in this

1 City in past years, and acquiring and
2 displaying historical artifacts and creating
3 an archival display or interactive hall of
4 achievement, telling the life stories of
5 eminent Dunbar graduates and the role Dunbar
6 had in their development.

7 I am pleased to note that we are
8 working on every dimension of our mission and
9 achieving a reasonable measure of success.
10 We want more for and from our students,
11 teachers, administrators, parents, school,
12 and school system. Dunbar is not what it
13 used to be: It is not as good as it needs to
14 be. Declines in school performance and
15 student achievement have mirrored changes in
16 preparation of incoming students, the quality
17 of teaching and offering at Dunbar, parental,
18 governmental, and community support.

19 The bottom line is that the level
20 of student and school achievement is not
21 acceptable. Our students, families, teachers
22 deserve better. Chancellor Rhee has ordered

1 Dunbar into restructuring, and the DAF has
2 been supporting this effort.

3 There are three big things we seek
4 to do. First, we seek to rebuild a broad
5 coalition of contribution to the success of
6 Dunbar, its students and families. Second,
7 we seek to advocate for the Turnaround
8 Artists appointed to restore academic and
9 cultural excellence at Dunbar. And third, we
10 seek to champion the acceleration of planning
11 and building of a new, state-of-the-art
12 school that facilitates great learning and
13 socialization.

14 Carrie Thornhill will tell you
15 specifically what we want in the FY 2010
16 proposal.

17 MS. THORNHILL: Mr. Mayor and
18 Deputy Mayor, we want you to know that
19 Chancellor Rhee appointed the Friends of
20 Bedford, Incorporated, of New York as the
21 non-profit school turnaround partner for Dunbar.

22 And we are pleased to say that we

1 strongly support this group, and we want you
2 to know that the latest news is that Bedford
3 Academy has recently been recognized in
4 Business Week as the number-one high school
5 in New York State for low-income students.

6 We want Friends of Bedford to be
7 successful at the mammoth task of turning
8 around Dunbar into a high-performing
9 organization toward a school of excellence
10 again.

11 As we understand it, Mr. Mayor and
12 Deputy Mayor, your new model of allocating
13 school-based funding does not provide
14 sufficient finances to support the turnaround
15 agenda of Friends of Bedford.

16 How do we know? They have asked us
17 for grant money far and beyond our ability
18 and/or that we think it is our
19 responsibility. But we want them to have
20 what they need to implement their successful
21 model, and we know you must, too.

22 Our assessment is that they require

1 additional resources amounting to
2 approximately \$1.5 million, of which 100,000
3 would be needed by May of this year, and a
4 portion of the remainder would be needed in
5 June so that new high-quality staff can be
6 recruited and selected before summer and
7 trained over the summer months.

8 These financial resources would be
9 used to establish a firm base for providing
10 both a psychological and therapeutic approach
11 toward corrective action in student behavior,
12 to develop a non-conventional school
13 environment, create a more conducive learning
14 environment that addresses the unhealthy
15 conditions and limited security during
16 classroom instruction and dismissal,
17 establish an after-school and Saturday
18 program geared at improving academic rigor
19 and test preparation for D.C.-CAS and SAT,
20 improve the preengineering program and
21 science and math instruction for students who
22 qualify for internships, and facilitate

1 technological advancements for computer-aided
2 instruction and all related activities which
3 target college preparation and career
4 development.

5 All of these elements, in our view,
6 are essential for the turnaround we envision.
7 Mr. Mayor, we appeal to you and the
8 Deputy Mayor and Chancellor Rhee to provide
9 Dunbar's Turnaround Artists what they need to
10 allow them to be effective in the short term,
11 to build the foundation for short- and
12 long-lasting results through a combination of
13 federal, local, and stimulus funding.

14 Otherwise, you can expect to get
15 what we have gotten in recent years; that is,
16 poor and inadequate school and student
17 performance.

18 We thank you for this opportunity
19 and stand ready for any questions you might
20 have.

21 MAYOR FENTY: Well, let me just thank
22 the both of you as we close out this hearing.

1 I think everyone is aware of the
2 challenges before the City. And there is
3 both the need to get our school system to be
4 the nation's best as fast as humanly
5 possible, and the challenge of turning around
6 a system that has not had the type of
7 support, energy, and productivity it has
8 needed for too long now.

9 We join with you. I think, while
10 there are lots of different strategies and
11 means to get to a goal, I can tell by this
12 hearing that, at least if this panel -- if
13 these three panels are a representation of
14 the views of the residents of the District of
15 the Columbia, then we all share the same
16 goal. And now it is just a matter of what
17 means we use and how fast we can get there.
18 And the administration will do everything we
19 can.

20 So please stay in touch with us as
21 we finish out the budget process. Everyone
22 is quite aware that, once it is submitted to

1 the council, the Council of the District of
2 Columbia then has public hearings where the
3 agencies under my management authority will
4 then testify, answer questions, and where the
5 budget will be finalized before it is
6 administered, beginning October 1st of this
7 year.

8 Thank you all very much. Thanks to
9 this last panel.

10 This hearing is adjourned at
11 approximately 10:23 on March 3, 2009.

12 (Whereupon, at approximately
13 10:23 a.m., the HEARING was
14 adjourned.)

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